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Israel

AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL PLANNING : ITS ORGANIZATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

By Raanan WEITZ, Ph.D. Agriculture,
Director-General,
Agricultural Settlement Department,
Jewish Agency, Israel

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AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL PLANNING: ITS ORGANIZATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Raanan Weitz, Ph.D. Agriculture, Director-General, Agricultural Settlement Department, Jewish Agency, Israel

SUMMARY

Dynamic changes are taking place in agriculture, not only in the developed, but perhaps mainly in the developing countries. The much-desired rise in the standard of living can be achieved through industrial development and increased efficiency of agriculture. Yet experience has shown these frequently to result in the abandonment of the rural areas and the creation of a rootless city proletariat. In conventional agricultural planning on a national scale a discrepancy has been encountered between national objectives and the effective possibilities of the farmer, while the free interplay of the free market can no longer serve as sole regulator. A new approach to agricultural and rural planning is thus sorely needed.

A comprehensive planning method has been conceived in Israel, based on the principle that government policy should aim at providing such conditions where the national production aimed at would also be worth while to the farmer and the traditional stability of the rural population would not be undermined. This approach is sub-divided into three systems of interrelated factors: (1) macro-planning: the optimal distribution of the means of production among the different branches of agriculture; (2) micro-planning: the distribution of the means of production among the different farmers; (3) the relationship between town and country, i.e. the appropriate integration between agriculture, industry and services in the rural areas. All these are to be studied and evaluated not only from from the economic viewpoint but also from the social, institutional, organisational, political and environmental aspect whose mutual interrelation should be thoroughly understood. Throughout, the human factor must be stressed, since it is of prime importance particularly in agriculture, where initiative is required of the farmer, which is not required of the ordinary industrial worker.

In the field of micro-planning the yardstick chosen in Israel is the coefficient of the net income of the farm as related to the projected rise in the national per capita income. This yardstick, much better than any physical measurement of means of production (land, water, climate) enables the planner to achieve a fair distribution of the means of production between town and country and among the individual farmers.

Within the third system it has been found useful to integrate certain industries in agricultural development, thus providing an alternative source of livelihood for surplus manpower and temporarily idle farmers and preventing them from

leaving the rural communities. Examples of specific solutions for particularly problematic rural areas in Israel are given. In order to prevent the depletion of the rural areas it is further suggested that rural communities be organised round rural centres where educational, medical and economic services are available. A triple-layered structure of villages, composite rural communities and "development regions" containing each a town centre, is thus proposed.

Special stress is laid on the close interrelation between the planning and implementation in rural and agricultural planning. It is suggested that a "feedback" mechanism be provided in the structure of the development authority, so that wherever necessary plans and objectives may be altered in the light of circumstances as they arise.

A non-centralised structure is proposed for the development authority so that it may remain flexible in its decision and in immediate touch with the population for whom the development programme is intended. Special all-round teams of professionals headed by a policy-maker versed in the comprehensive planning approach are described, which by living close to the community for whom the development plan is designed have a decisive effect on the success of the plan.

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